Banks, policies towards rural areas on home loan front

†2413. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that banks are neglecting rural areas and small cities regarding home loan cases;

(b) the details of the percentage of home loan given to rural areas, small cities, semi-urban areas, cities and metropolitan cities during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether Government is considering to issue guidelines to all the banks in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) According to information furnished by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the number of accounts of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) in rural & semi-urban areas increased by 27 per cent between March end 2005 and March end 2007. The amount of outstanding loans in these areas recorded an increase of 50 per cent during same period. However, the growth of housing loans in urban and metropolitan areas has been much more rapid. The details of percentage share of number of accounts and outstanding housing loan of SCBs in rural, semi-urban, urban and metropolitan areas for the years ending March 2005, 2006 and 2007 (latest available) is given below:

(Percentage share)

As on		Rural	Semi-urban	Urban	Metropolitan
31.3.2005	No. of Accounts	16.66	25.00	30.84	27.50
	Amount	10.27	15.21	27.21	47.30
31.3.2006	No. of Accounts	16.06	22.14	29.71	32.09
	Amount	10.00	13.14	25.16	51.71
31.3.2007*	No. of Accounts	15.11	22.11	27.90	34.88
	Amount	8.75	12.39	24.40	54.46

SOURCE: Reserve Bank of India. * Provisional

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Rebate on taxes to exporters

†2414. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a proposal of giving benefit of rebate on taxes at both State and Central level to exporters.

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of industries which would benefit from this; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) by when the benefit of rebate on these taxes would be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Steps to curb inflation

2415. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the rate of inflation as on 31st March, for the last three years;

(b) whether the prices of essential commodities like cereals, pulses, edible oils and vegetables continues to soar due to inflation and as a result general public are severely affected;

(c) if so, the details of increase in prices of these commoditie along with the percentage of increase during the last three years, commodity-wise; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to contain price rise of these essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The inflation measured in terms of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for all commodities and essential commodities like cereals, pulses, edible oils and vegetables are indicated in Table I.

Table I: Year-on-year inflation rates in March (%)

Average of weeks	All commodities	Cereals	Pulses	Vegetables	Edible oils
March, 2006	3.9	5.6	28.7	4.9	-3.5
March, 2007	6.6	7.4	15.3	25.1	13.8
March, 2008 P	6.4	6.3	-3.0	9.2	18.7

P: Provisional

Containment of inflation remains high on the agenda of the Government. Anti-inflationary policies of the Government include strict fiscal discipline, rationalization of duties of essential items, effective supply-demand management of essential commodities through liberal tariff and trade policies and procurement by public agencies. The Monetary policy of Reserve Bank of India, while being conducive to economic growth, has also attempted to contain inflationary expectations arising out of uncertainties in domestic and international environment.

Merging of ICICI bank with foreign company

† 2416. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ICICI Bank has been merged with any foreign company;

(b) the percentage of Bank's share after the merger;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.